



Parish of St Peter & The Good Shepherd

Bearsted & Harrietsham

A Member of Bearsted Area Churches Together



Newsletter

St Peter's Church, Button Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME15 8NJ

Church of The Good Shepherd, Rectory Lane (off East Street), Harrietsham, ME17 1HS

Parish Priest: Father Geoffrey Pointer: 01622 736100, email: bearsted@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Deacon: Reverend Cyril Durbin: 01622 630055

St Peter's Hall Bookings: 07919 084730

Catholic Schools in our local area:

St Francis Primary, Queen's Road, Maidstone ME16 0LB (Telephone: 771540)

The Holy Family Primary, Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone ME15 9PS (Telephone: 756778)

St Simon Stock Catholic Secondary, Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP (Telephone: 754551)

Parish Website and YouTube:

www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Year A

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

15th DECEMBER 2019

FAITH in FOCUS: MYOPIC EXPECTATION It's at this time of year that our children are asking for every new toy they see on the TV. As discerning adults we know the castle that lights up, shoots arrows and transforms into a fire spouting dragon will just be a frustrating lump of plastic once we get it home, with batteries that give up after three minutes. Our children's expectations are unrealistic and it is up to us to buy a toy that we know will be more fun. Today's gospel is all about myopic expectation.

From his prison cell John the Baptist sends word to Jesus. "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answers, "Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." It's interesting that Jesus doesn't send back a "Yes I am," kind of answer. Rather he sends a "Work it out yourself," kind of answer. He asks John to look at the evidence. It seems strange that John, normally so certain and so confident should declare a doubt, but perhaps we can understand his disappointment. John has been arrested and thrown into prison. He is feeling tired and disillusioned. It is likely that he'd had misguided expectations of Jesus. Perhaps he'd expected Jesus to come in the manner of a king or of a great warrior with the power to conquer the oppressor. John has some working out to do. John needs to understand that the work of a Messiah is to teach God's love, not just push a few Romans around.



So what of our own expectations? Do we expect God to sort out all our problems and make our lives easy and comfortable? Or do we believe that God is there to help change us and guide us through our daily choices. Do we understand that God is preparing us for his kingdom or are we guilty of myopic expectation? Perhaps we have some working out of our own to do. *Chapel Bell*



RECOMMENDED for ADVENT (see <http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/>) Advent is a time of devout and expectant delight. In the second phase of the season, from **17th December** (this Tuesday), the liturgy is more directly addressed to preparing to commemorate and celebrate the birth of Our Lord, and the readings at daily Mass reflect this. Try then to get to Mass during the final days of Advent: there is so much beauty in the readings of this season. ♦ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (confession).

GAUDETE SUNDAY *Today.* 'Gaudete' is translated as 'Rejoice', the first word of the introit. The lesson we can take from this is that Christians ought to be the most hopeful and cheerful of people, bringing both joy and peace into their homes and families, workplaces, and social circles.

ADVENT APPEAL Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter for the homeless. Envelopes are now available. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES All have now been delivered; many thanks to our volunteers! ★ Pick up a Knights of St Columba **Christmas poster** and display it in your window or other prominent position.

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW The draw takes place **this Sunday after Mass.**

FRIDAY COFFEE At our recent parish gathering it was suggested that we revive a previous custom of offering coffee after Mass at St Peter's on Friday mornings. ☺ We'll give it a try this week: **20th December.**

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, next Sunday, **22nd December:** back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

MAIDSTONE DAY CENTRE In **January** there will be a collection of toiletries for men and women. Please leave any donations in the parish room. In February we will be collecting new and good used clothing for men and women.

LENT APPEAL 2019 raised **£165** for CAFOD. This year St Peter's and The Good Shepherd Parish gave **£949.83** to CAFOD. Christine Allen, CAFOD director, says thank you once again for helping CAFOD to keep the flame of hope burning brightly in some of the hardest-to-reach corners of the globe.

CHRISTMAS FOOD BANKS It isn't hard to know that we are increasingly dependent on food banks. Food banks have their critics, but for those with nothing to live on they are a life line. As you do your weekly shop think of families with nothing to eat this Christmas. Try looking out for those 'two for one' promotions and give one away. If everyone who went into the supermarket bought one extra item the food banks would be full this Christmas.

**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 15th DECEMBER 2019
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

✠ **THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (A)** ✠
Gaudete Sunday

Sun 15th	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Mass of the Angels
		7.30pm	<i>Bearsted Choral Society Concert</i>
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Hilary Ashdowne RIP
		4.00pm	Baptism, Margo Currin
Mon 16th	Feria	7.00pm	✠ Mass
Tue 17th <i>O Sapientia</i>	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass <i>(followed by Adoration until 12noon)</i>
Wed 18th <i>O Adonai</i>	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✠ Mass
		7.30pm	<i>Carols on the Green (Bearsted)</i>
Thu 19th <i>O Radix Jesse</i>	Feria	7.00am	✠ Mass
		6.00pm	<i>Family Carols</i>
Fri 20th <i>O Clavis David</i>	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: John and Helen Nicol RIP <i>Coffee after Mass</i>
Sat 21st <i>O Oriens</i>	Feria	5-5.30pm	<i>Confessions</i>
✠ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (A) ✠			
Sun 22nd	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Gretl Bignell RIP
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo

THURSDAY MORNING MASS As from the New Year, Mass on a Thursday morning will be discontinued (final Mass this week). Apologies for any inconvenience.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **As we celebrate Gaudete Sunday:** for the Church, that we will be a light shining in a dark world, bringing hope with our practical help and support to those in need throughout the world.
- **With the Holy Father for December:** for the future of the very young, that every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes,** especially Terry Kinsman and Peter Walter; for those who have died recently especially Gretl Bignell; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and those who have asked for prayers.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✠ James Brennan, Edward Kinsman, Yvonne Murray, Hannah Haden and David Pinnington. ✠

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£274.11** (of which, **£140.00** was **Gift Aided**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank amount to **£185.00**). ♦ The retiring collection to help with the cost of **flowers and decorations** at Christmas came to **£125.15**. ♦ The Quiz Night made **£335** for the Winter Shelter ☺.

HOMELESS at CHRISTMAS We tend to have a preconception that those who are homeless are run-aways, addicts or those with mental health problems. Whilst there is truth in this, there are many other reasons why any one of us could end up homeless. It is said that any one of us could be just a couple of pay days away from being out on the street. Any one of us could fall prey to an unscrupulous landlord, job loss or the breakdown of a relationship. Charities like Shelter, Crisis or the Salvation Army are equipped not just to support the homeless at Christmas, but support people back into a safe place to live. Think about making a donation this Christmas to one of the homeless charities to help put someone's life back on track.

THE YEAR OF THE WORD In partnership with Bible Society, the Year of the Word focuses on celebrating, living and sharing God's word throughout the Catholic Church in England and Wales until the end of December 2020. Pick up a booklet 'The God who Speaks' for more information, or visit: <http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/>.

COMING UP:

- **FIRST COMMUNIONS** The next session for the children will be on **Friday 10th January** at St Peter's.
- **PEACE SUNDAY, 19th January.**